

Evaluation Report on Progress Made through the OSCE's Efforts to Unify the Gymnasium Mostar: Summer 2003 to Fall 2006

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¹ See Bio at Appendix D.

Executive Summary:

This report presents an evaluation of the unification of the Gymnasium Mostar in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), as commissioned by the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to BiH.

In 2003, as a part of its education mandate, the OSCE Head of Mission Ambassador Robert Beecroft, supported by Regional Centre education staff and encouraged by the Mostar unification process being driven by High Representative Paddy Ashdown², saw an opportunity to work with the local politicians responsible for school administration decisions to pursue unification of the Gymnasium Mostar. The Gymnasium Mostar was an historic and premier secondary school prior to the war of 1992-1995. It was completely destroyed during the war and had become the centre of an effort to revitalize the historic Mostar downtown. An initiative to restore the multinational and high-quality nature of the school was viewed as an opportunity to use this divided school in this divided city as a model or beacon for potential reform efforts throughout the country.

Post-war education in BiH presents a very complex set of problems largely focused on assimilation/non-assimilation issues. Three main curricula are used, and these reflect divisions along ethnic lines. All curricula share the same common core curriculum, but this is only sizeable for non-contentious subjects such as Mathematics. In the so-called National Group of Subjects (NGS: Language, History, Geography, Religion) there are very few common elements. Most schools cater for only one ethnic group teaching the politically coloured, non-inclusive curriculum of that group. If there are fewer than 18 students of another national group, they are

² See *Commission for Reforming the City of Mostar: Recommendations of the Commission Report of the Chairman*, 15 December 2003, available at www.ohr.int.

expected to assimilate and study the majority curriculum. This situation can be found in both the Republika Srpska and in the Federation of BiH and in any combination of majority/minority students. There are cases of students being bussed from a location where they would be the minority in their local schools to schools where their national group is in the majority. There are also several examples of the phenomenon called “two-schools-under-one roof” where Bosniak and Croat students are separated by nationality/curriculum and attend school in shifts or at the same time but entering the divided school facility through separate doors, having only peripheral contact with “the other” students. All of those interviewed attested to the fact that minority – often returnee – children are able to attend “monoethnic” schools, but they are expected to accept, for various reasons, subtle or not so subtle assimilation.

In 2003 in Mostar, Croat students were already going to classes in the minimally functional building of the former Gymnasium, and Bosniak (Muslim) students were eager to return. There was resistance from some, but the OSCE Head of Mission and staff began an intensive effort to capitalize on those political decision-makers who were ready to pursue administrative unification. At the same time, OSCE staff began working with potential Bosniak and Croat students by bringing them together in joint extracurricular activities. The result of these efforts was the return of the Bosniak students and additional Croat students to the Gymnasium Mostar under a unified administration with unified teachers’ and students’ councils.

The evaluation consisted of (1) a review of archival documents related to pre- and post-war education in BiH and, in particular, to the Gymnasium Mostar, (2) interviews with OSCE staff and key stakeholders in Mostar, and (3) analysis of data. Interviews were held with students, directors, teachers, school board members and other local stakeholders. As well, interviews were conducted with the directors of the Traffic and Construction schools in Mostar, directors and parents at a Prozor/Rama primary school and at Zepce secondary school.

The findings in this report are highly positive. Everyone interviewed in Mostar had only positive things to report about the effort and believed that the unification of the Gymnasium would not have occurred as smoothly had it not been for the constructive intervention of the OSCE and the donors the OSCE was able to find to restore the school and provide training for teachers and students in a variety of areas. Students and the two directors, in particular, stressed the need for the OSCE to continue involvement with the school as the integration that has occurred there begins to grow institutionalised. The findings include:

- The Gymnasium Mostar is now an administratively unified school, though using two curricula, with approximately 900 students of all nationalities meeting together in the same building and joining each other regularly for extra-curricular activities and their first regular integrated classes.
- Successful unification of administrative components has taken place – including regular joint school board meetings, a single school director exercising authority over both curricula, and savings in terms of costs (school secretary cut, along with librarian).
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- The building is largely renovated with the top floor half-renovated and the façade to be completed in the near future.
- Successful efforts to create common spaces and bodies have taken place, such as the formation of a joint student council, student council room and library.
- Installation of modern science laboratories (by Norway) enables these to be used for International Baccalaureate (IB) classes and other integrated extra-curricular science classes comprised of students from both curricula.
- The IB program housed within the reconstructed Gymnasium has been a popular method of emphasizing quality education, and has managed to attract students from across BiH and the region.
- Installation of a state-of-the-art information technology laboratory by Japan and Italy enables this to be used for integrated extra-curricular IT classes and, most recently, integrated practical IT classes that are part of the regular Gymnasium curriculum.
- Stakeholders report they have increased skills in lobbying decision makers after working with the OSCE on this project.

- Some 100 students – from all over BiH, the Balkans region, Western Europe, the Middle East and North America at the Gymnasium are studying in all English international IB classes.
- Bosniak students are studying the Croat curriculum in Croat classes to fill unsubscribed Croat slots.
- Education reform is taking place, but students are particularly frustrated with the slowness of this effort. They want an education that meets international standards.
- Parents and politicians are seen as the continuing source of fostering nationalistic feelings among students. Engaging parents in joint activities with teachers and students is seen as a key to moving school unification forward.

Eight recommendations emerged from the findings:

1. **Education Reform:** From the interviews in Mostar, Prozor/Rama and Zepce, it appears there are different levels of community readiness for school unification. In recognising the current political and social obstructions to unification, the OSCE should make efforts to shape attitudes towards unification among those who accept the idea and build out from there. This might be done through certain specific initiatives, such as - quantifying/publicizing the financial waste, organising study visits of parent, student and teacher representatives to schools which have been successfully unified to gather first hand information on the implications of unification (e.g., will not result in the loss of teaching jobs), encouraging NGOs to organise joint extra-curricula activities.
2. **Support for Unification:** To build interest and support for unification, use students, teachers and administrators, perhaps in teams, to tell the story of what worked at the Gymnasium Mostar. Use the findings from this report to continue to foster a desire for unification based on an understanding of its cost-effectiveness and contribution to quality of education.
3. **Clarification of Facts:** Questions over legal ownership of school property are a way in which communities attempt to avoid unification, along with the claim that many jobs would be lost if unification occurred. The OSCE should conduct a fact-finding exercise that would assist supporters of unification in arguing the facts of these issues.
4. **Language:** All recognized the desire on the part of some parents for separate languages for their children as a very serious and deep-rooted dilemma. Slow and steady change was recommended through the introduction of an increasing number of alternatives for students that provide a *voluntary opportunity* for them to study and learn together (through extra-curricular IT and science classes, for example) using shared language and English.
5. **Joint Extracurricular Activities:** The OSCE should continue to support, sponsor and conduct joint extracurricular activities for students, teachers and parents.

6. **Support of Technical/Vocational Unification:** The same recommendation as Education Reform above, as well as providing joint activities for administrators, teachers and students to foster an environment conducive to a move toward unification.
7. **Rule of Law:** Through rule of law and democratisation efforts, the OSCE should continue to help stakeholders build capacity to interact constructively and effectively with elected officials.

This project has achieved several outcomes at this stage: while the circumstances of Mostar were unique to this project; the recommendations are designed to identify steps that can be taken by the OSCE and its partners in different combinations in other communities that may be at different levels of readiness. Supporting adoption of the Law on the Education Agency and continuing support for development of a single, flexible curriculum for use throughout BiH can perhaps best accomplish this outcome.

I. Introduction

Since 2003, the OSCE Mission to BiH participated in and supported an effort to restore the historic Gymnasium Mostar as a premier public school in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). This was one component of a larger unification effort to restore the vitality of the City of Mostar after the losses suffered during the 1992-1995 war. Engagement in this project fell within the bounds of the OSCE's education mandate in BiH. The OSCE Mission to BiH, headquartered in Sarajevo, requested an assessment of the project by an outside evaluator to: (1) ascertain if there were definable short-term outcomes; (2) determine lessons learned for possible replication or transfer to other schools in BiH; and (3) make appropriate recommendations for further action. The evaluation timeframe consisted of two weeks of document review, six weeks of field research in BiH, mostly spent in Mostar, and a follow-up period for data analysis and report writing. The evaluator visited BiH during the months of October and November 2006.

II. Background on the City of Mostar and the Gymnasium Mostar

Much has been written about the effects of the war on the people of this region, especially the effects on education³. A variety of reports and other documents were reviewed as background for the preparation of this report (See Appendix A). In brief, prior to the war when BiH was one of six republics making up Yugoslavia, school populations in BiH consisted largely of a mixture of three constituent or national groups as well as a number of minority groups. The three main groups were and are Bosniaks (primarily Muslims), Croats (primarily Catholics) and Serbs (primarily Orthodox). While the three populations were not exactly evenly distributed

³ See, for example: Torsti, P. 2003; Perry, V. 2003; *Question of Survival* 1998.

throughout, there were generally, significant numbers of each group living across the BiH region. They communicated through a shared language (called Serbo-Croatian) and students studied from the same textbooks. The war changed this situation drastically and in a variety of ways.

After the war, the physical damage throughout the country was extreme, school building space was in short supply, and Mostar was no exception. In Mostar, there were three gymnasia in addition to the gutted Gymnasium Mostar. One of those schools was Croat-majority and two were Bosniak-majority. The pre-war, Bosniak students from the Gymnasium Mostar were now displaced. They were crowded into a primary school using the desks of primary aged students and going to school in shifts. The Second Gymnasium is still in existence as a primarily Bosniak school. A few years after the war the Croats restored a few of the classrooms of the Gymnasium Mostar building and moved students into the building announcing legal ownership of the school. In interviews conducted for this report, it was noted that this action precluded the potential return of Bosniak students to the Gymnasium, and even with minimal classroom restoration, the building and the surrounding grounds were physically unsafe for any students.

Mostar is one of the main centres of history and culture in BiH and the surrounding region. After the war, BiH has the status of an independent state that is divided into the Republika Srpska, now populated mostly by Serbs, the BiH Federation which is made up of ten cantons and populated by a mixture of mostly Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats and the District of Brcko. (Mostar is in Canton 7, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.) Prior to the war, all three national groups lived together in and around Mostar, and while still numerically small, Serbs have returned as well.

Key to the background on the Gymnasium Mostar project is the history and location of the school building. Mostar is famous for its Ottoman and later Austro-Hungarian architecture. It is the site of one of the technical wonders of the ancient world, the Old Bridge, or Stari Most, destroyed

during the war but recently rebuilt. The Gymnasium Mostar was considered one of the best secondary schools in all of Yugoslavia and was housed in one of the Austro-Hungarian era buildings in the city centre. This area of Mostar was a frontline of the war. All of the buildings in this area of town were gutted during the conflict. The significance of its front-line status was raised by most of those interviewed for this report as a way of stressing the deep multinational, symbolic and emotional attachment to this site. Several of the adults interviewed for this report and the parents of several of the students, either reported or were reported to have a strong commitment to bringing the Gymnasium Mostar back to its “crown jewel” status as several of them were graduates of the former school. These included Bosniak and Croat respondents.

The European Union and the Council of Europe, along with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), were expending efforts to assist BiH in the reconstruction of government institutions and infrastructure. As a part of the broader effort to unify the city initiated by High Representative Ashdown in 2003, Mostar’s city centre became a major focus for this effort, including the Gymnasium Mostar.

III. The Post-war Status of Education

In the aftermath of war and the subsequent process of groups vying for power and cultural supremacy, the education system was carved up by ethnicity and curriculum. The Croats, in particular, wanted their children taught in the language they claimed for their own ethnic/national group⁴. This demand for language differentiation was used as the basis for ensuring education

⁴ While the right to **learn** one’s own language is guaranteed, there is no guarantee in any convention or in the BiH and Entity constitutions that peoples have the right to be taught **in** a particular language.

would be provided separately⁵, and led to a variety of potential educational settings. The most common model is the essentially monoethnic school catering for a single ethnic group. These are found mostly in monoethnic or virtually monoethnic communities today where only one of three politically coloured, non-inclusive curricula is being used. Though all interviewed acknowledged that most schools were open to any “minority” student, if there are fewer than 18 in a class they will have to study according to the curriculum, including the National Group of Subjects (NGS), that is offered in that school. These students are expected to accept assimilation. One school official that visits many schools in her work said, “I hear stories and see for myself as well. I don’t think professors or students are insulting others, but in most schools in Mostar and this canton children of one nationality who go to monoethnic schools as minorities will be faced with religious and nationalist symbols that are not their own.” In other words, they are expected to assimilate and suppress their own expressions of national identity.

Another, much rarer model involves schools that are largely monoethnic, but where ‘minority’ – often returnee – students are in sufficient numbers to form a “critical mass” and negotiate some recognition of their different needs. In these schools the “minority” students take some classes in the national curriculum of their majority peers, but are able to opt for the separate teaching of politically sensitive subjects like Language and History according to their own NSG.

A third option is referred to as “two-schools-under-one-roof” (two-under-one). This situation was actually meant to be a *temporary* solution to get children back into a formal school setting, whereas they had in some cases been forced to study in cafes or private homes. In the interviews, most spoke of it as a now established model, though most also acknowledged that they do not

⁵ The BiH Constitutional Court has specifically denied that any BiH higher education institution can teach in one or even two languages only, stating “In a multi-national state such as Bosnia and Herzegovina the legitimated aim is not assimilation or segregation on the ground of language.” (Case No. U-8/04)

believe this is the way it should remain over the long run. The Croat directors interviewed for this report in Prozor/Rama and at the Traffic and Construction Schools in Mostar expressed the least hope that the system could move beyond the two-under-one situation.

In this two-under-one system, everything is duplicated, e.g. there are two directors, two teachers' councils, two student councils, two curricula and separate textbooks in the national languages, etc. Students may go to school in shifts with one group of children going to school in a morning shift and the other group in the afternoon. The children only interact with children of the other group when the shifts change at midday. This overlapping moment in the day is often a time when potential conflict may easily arise. Or, two groups may go at the same time, but in separate parts of the building and entering through separate doors.

The problems with such a complex education system are well documented^{6, 7} and were referred to frequently in the interviews for this evaluation. They include:

- Implementing two different school administrations is very costly as most of the funding goes to personnel and not towards much needed training, supplies, and infrastructure restoration.
- Teaching children of different national groups in separate classes is not conducive to establishing a common understanding of the various groups that make up the state, and involves parallel production and procurement of materials that could more easily and efficiently be procured from a single source⁸.
- Continued support of separate education based on national/ethnic background does not serve children well in preparing them for an active role in their community, country, and

⁶ Cukur, Melita and Eastmond, Marita: *Education and new national identities: Local responses to post-war curricula in two settings in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Department of Social Anthropology, Goteborg University, Sweden).

⁷ *Question of Survival – a common education system for Bosnia-Herzegovina*, April 1998. Seminar organized by the Bosnian Institute and held at St. Anthony's Monastery, Sarajevo. English version edited and translated by Branka Mag.

⁸ The 'FBiH curriculum' has a relatively open tender for textbooks, but the Croat language curriculum relies on books from the Republic of Croatia, slightly modified and reprinted.

the wider world. These models provide continued opportunity for one group to “force” their symbols and beliefs on another.

IV. The OSCE’s Involvement in the Gymnasium Mostar

As the problems inherent in BiH’s education system became clear, in 2002, the OSCE broadened its work in human rights and democratization to include a focus on education in its mandate in BiH. The OSCE website describes the role as:

“Education reform is an immense undertaking, involving hundreds of local education experts, authorities and NGOs, as well as international agencies. The OSCE draws on its vast experience in developing public policy, its sophisticated advocacy capacity and its strong field presence to help the process of reform move forward and to encourage increased local ownership in this process from the grassroots to the ministry levels.

“OSCE activities support the development of a more multicultural education system no longer burdened by nationalist politics and which fulfils the educational needs and fully respects the identity and culture of all students.”⁹

“The Education Programme is currently based on five priorities:

- Coordination/political support to reform as required
- Legislation
- Access and Non-discrimination
- Civic Involvement in the education reform process (i.e., PTAs, student councils, student councils.”¹⁰
- Finance and Management

⁹ <http://www.osce.org>.

¹⁰ <http://www.osce.org>.

In another OSCE internal document¹¹, Valery Perry describes the initially envisioned role of the OSCE in the following way: “The OSCE’s role in education reform would be that of a flag bearer and coordinator, working to coordinate IC activities and provide a common strategy or vision that would bring together the various disparate technical efforts.” Perry also lists five pledges agreed to by BiH officials in November 2002 as a part of the overall education reform effort. Six thematic working groups that had an 80 per cent membership of BiH local experts developed the pledges:

- Pledge 1: Access to quality education in integrated multicultural schools¹².
- Pledge 2: Provide basic education at pre-school primary and general secondary levels with modern curriculum and systems of assessment, in well managed and equipped schools.
- Pledge 3: Support BiH economic development through development of modern and flexible vocational education program.
- Pledge 4: Raise the quality of higher education and research in BiH.
- Pledge 5: Ensure transparent, equitable and cost-effective use of public resources for education.

The restoration and revitalization of the Gymnasium Mostar project began to take shape in 2003 as a part of a larger effort by local authorities and the IC. Mostar and its surrounding municipalities were in the process of being unified into one municipality that would bring the schools in this catchment area under the control of one city government. The OSCE Head of Mission for BiH at the time, Ambassador Robert Beecroft, and the Regional Centre education coordinator and staff recognized the need for better physical conditions for the Bosniak

¹¹ Perry, V. *The Mission’s Mandate, Role and Approach to Education Reform: A Multi-perspective History*, November 2005.

¹² This is also based on BiH’s Post Accession commitments to the Council of Europe: to eliminate segregation in the education system. The Peace Implementation Council also called, in 2003, for segregation in schools to be ended.

gymnasium students and saw an opportunity for a project that might contribute to reunification of the city in line with the BiH authorities' first pledge: access to quality education in integrated multicultural schools. It seemed appropriate to use this historic and previously high quality school to implement efforts that would result in positive outcomes demonstrating the value of at least the unification of school administrations in communities. At the same time, Bosniak leaders were pushing to bring their students back to the Gymnasium Mostar, which had been renamed Fra Dominik Mandic by the Croats¹³. Little movement had taken place when Amb. Beecroft and OSCE Education Department staff in Mostar began to urge a more rapid move towards unification. A few respondents believed that at the time there was also a growing awareness among local political leaders addressing issues of human rights, education, political transparency, etc., that these were essential to becoming a member of the greater European community. Though there was, and still is, strong resistance in some quarters to making these changes, there appears to have been a moment of readiness that may have evolved as other political priorities evolved. The exact turning point was unclear from the interviews. One Gymnasium Mostar teacher interviewed for this report described the state of readiness for the unification of the school as a point in time when "the dark forces weren't so loud."

Amb. Beecroft and Matthew Newton, Education Coordinator for the OSCE Regional Centre in Mostar, attended meetings with city officials to begin the discussions on the return of Bosniak students and how to establish a unified school administration (an administrative staff and school board). After discussions at several meetings, the City Council agreed to unify the administration for the Gymnasium Mostar and allow the return of the Bosniak students. As opposed to the two-under-one model, here the students were to go to school in shifts based upon their *grade level*,

¹³ The name was changed to "Gymnasium Mostar" in late winter 2004.

and not their national or ethnic group. Third and fourth year students went in the morning, and first and second year students in the afternoon. Teachers were of mixed ethnicity and there was one director and one deputy director. Unification required that the directors and school board chair be one of each national group, e.g., a Croat director and a Bosniak school board chair in this case. As a precursor to bringing the two groups of students together in this manner, the OSCE sponsored some extracurricular activities for them that ultimately led to the establishment of a unified student council and other ongoing, joint extra-curricular activities such as sports.

The OSCE's budget was designated for integration activities across BiH and some of these funds were used for the Gymnasium Mostar project. The OSCE also worked with a variety of donors to bring in significant amounts to fund joint activities for youth, restore the school building, build out all of the classrooms and bring in equipment and supplies. The other donors included Spain, Italy, Norway and Japan. Spain took responsibility for restoring the building façade, Norway committed funds for capacity building of students and student groups and improved library and laboratory facilities, while Italy and Japan provided resources to set up an information technology (IT) laboratory. In September 2005, the OSCE Mission and Norwegian Embassy also agreed to further modify the objectives to encourage networking between the secondary school students in Herzegovina and joint lobbying/advocacy, through supporting the initiative of the student councils to create three Student Unions and a Herzegovina Coordination Body.

V. Methodology and Processes Used for the Evaluation

This study was conducted from October 1 to December 31, 2006. The objectives set forth for the contract included:

- Review of the OSCE's involvement in the Gymnasium.

- Analysis of the impact of this involvement on stakeholders.
- Visits with one to two schools *not* receiving the same special programmatic emphasis from the OSCE.
- Assessment of the impact of Mission activities on conflict resolution and peace building in the school and in the broader Mostar community.
- Reference to theories related to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, e.g., conflict resolution, peace building, contact theory, etc.
- Development of recommendations.

Based upon review of the archival documents listed in Appendix A and interviews with OSCE EDD staff and others in Sarajevo from October 2 through 4, the evaluator developed a series of open-ended questions (Appendix B) to be put to those interviewed in Mostar. The interview questions were designed to take into account the OSCE's explicit objectives (described below) set for the project and to gather the information that might go beyond outcomes or explicit objectives. The questions (Appendix B) developed were generic and meant to be tailored to each specific interview based upon the type of knowledge and involvement the interviewee might have had with the process. The evaluator did not review the expected outcomes with those interviewed in order to capture the widest possible perceptions of the project without limiting those perceptions by guiding them.

While the small number of interviewees did not lend itself to a broad, quantitative interpretation of the data, this questioning process provided a more in-depth perspective from individuals. Because the time was short, school was in session, and some stakeholders were involved in workshops, the selection of interviewees was not random. In collaboration with OSCE staff, those who were considered most knowledgeable about the project from the beginning and those who were most involved in implementation or participation were chosen for interviews.

Interviewees also themselves recommended some of those interviewed.

To meet the contract requirement of visiting one or more schools *not* receiving the same emphasis from the OSCE as the Gymnasium Mostar, two schools were chosen. The first was a primary school in Prozor/Rama being run as two-under-one. The second was a mixed high school (gymnasium and technical) in Zepce that was an administratively unified school similar to the Gymnasium Mostar, but the unification process was different from that of Mostar's and the OSCE was less involved. The directors of the Traffic School and Construction School in Mostar and a Croat and Bosniak student from the Traffic School were also interviewed as these schools were in the midst of regaining useable classroom buildings and relocating Bosniak and Croat students into the new spaces, and it was of interest in this study to see what effect, if any, impact the unification of the Gymnasium Mostar might have on their circumstances.

There were three small, but potentially important categories of stakeholders who were not available to the evaluator. These were parents of both national groups, one or two Croat politicians who initially opposed the unification effort, and a few students of unidentified nationality who were reported to have actively engaged in nationalist/ethnically negative behaviours. Parents are often a difficult group to engage in these types of assessments as they may have long working hours, or may feel somewhat threatened by what they perceive as the "political" nature of evaluation. However, many of those who were interviewed in their more official roles have children who attended the Gymnasium Mostar and spoke openly about their children's experience there. There were at least two teachers and one politician who were described to the evaluator as having resisted the unification who were invited to participate in the interviews, but all three declined. Those interviewed described students who were caught up in nationalistic rhetoric and behaviour as few and far between, and who were mostly marginalized by a majority who supported unification and integration. As all of the interviews were voluntary

and the time was short, the evaluator chose not to press these stakeholders or to push to interview a few negative students. The evaluator did spend several hours overlapping the morning and afternoon shifts in the student council room and students were informed of her availability if they wanted to talk about their experience. Only a few members of the student council showed up for this opportunity.

There were people among those interviewed who were not staunch supporters of the effort in the beginning and who were able to reflect back on some of the perceived negatives at the time of the project's inception. Those interviewed also reported on opposition to the project among their colleagues and peers. In an environment such as that in Mostar where nationalism is such a pervasive force in politics, social life, etc., one could expect those interviewed to be biased to some degree. At the same time, the evaluator was one of many such interviewers with whom the stakeholders had interacted, and it might also be assumed that the responses were designed to be politically correct. In the circumstances facing the Gymnasium Mostar stakeholders and their relationship with the OSCE much could be at stake so it might be assumed that they would say what they thought the evaluator (or the OSCE) wanted to hear. There were a few who acknowledge that they were tired of being interviewed about the subjects of the war, its aftermath, and the Gymnasium project. However, the evaluator's perceptions of the responses of those interviewed were that they were generally forthright. The interviews ranged from one half hour to an hour and the participants often volunteered information beyond what the evaluator was asking. Overall, the interview results are considered to be of fairly high quality, and transparent enough to be able to discern the moments of bias and/or political correctness. The two interpreters who assisted the evaluator also provided a balance in that they were both present from the start of the Gymnasium Mostar project, and knew each stakeholder's history as well as their current involvement. Appendix C contains a list of those interviewed.

The data gathered for this report is organized around the objectives cited by the OSCE in the “Funding Request to the Council of Europe Development Bank for the Revitalization of the Gymnasium Mostar” (2005)¹⁴ and in the Norwegian Final Report (2006)¹⁵. These two documents are used for this report as they were found to most clearly describe the expectations that had evolved earlier for the OSCE’s specific involvement in the restoration of the Gymnasium Mostar as a school and a symbol in the larger scheme of the rehabilitation of the historic Mostar city centre.

A. OSCE objectives of the project:

- a. To increase the overall number of Bosniak, Croat and Serb students enrolled in the unified Gymnasium.
- b. To promote the administrative unification of the six ‘two schools under roof’ in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.
- c. To support the further legal and administrative unification of the school, through the provision of material support to the joint administration and teachers room.
- d. To facilitate the return of the remaining 200 Federation curriculum students to the building, through the reconstruction and furnishing of four classrooms on the second floor.
- e. To promote further meaningful interaction between the students of the two curricula, through supporting the joint library resource centre and sports teams/activities.
- f. To create the conditions for additional students to benefit from the unified Gymnasium, through completing the reconstruction of the building and thereby increasing the capacity of the school from 650 to 1,050 students.

¹⁴ *Overview of the Gymnasium Mostar – EDD involvement*: Claude Kieffer memorandum to Ambassador Davidson, Head of Mission, OSCE, Sarajevo.

¹⁵ *Norwegian Embassy Final Report*, 2006. Additionally, the emphasis of this evaluation on the Norwegian objectives should not presume that the other donor activities were less important; however the Norwegian work was more related to the “hearts and minds” work of the OSCE, rather than the construction oriented tasks of some of the other donors.

- g. To promote the administrative unification of the six ‘two schools under roof’ in Herzegovina-Neretva, through promoting the transfer of good practice from the Gymnasium Mostar.

B. The Norwegians, working with the OSCE, committed funding to the following objectives:

- a. Promoting a spirit of community service among the Gymnasium Mostar students, and interaction between the Bosniaks and Croats, through supporting joint student council activities in the local community.
- b. Encouraging a broader perspective, independent research and critical thinking among students, and interaction between Bosniak and Croat students of the Gymnasium Mostar, through supporting the establishment of a common library resource centre for the Federation and Croat curricula students.
- c. Introduction of integrated classes and modern teaching practices, through supporting the installation of new UWC/IB science laboratories.
- d. Attracting more students to the Gymnasium Mostar by improving the appearance of the building, and closing of the building to the elements, through installing windows on the top floor of the building.

VI. Findings from Interviews and Document Review

The results of the interviews are first organized by the explicit objectives described above and set forth by the OSCE and Norwegian Embassy. This is followed by additional findings offered by stakeholders that may not fit neatly into the stated objectives but add further depth or describe identified outcomes.

OSCE and Norwegian Objectives:

- a. To increase the overall number of Bosniak, Croat and Serb students enrolled in the unified Gymnasium (OSCE objective).*

This objective was accomplished, though the full student body is made up mostly of Bosniak and Croat students as Serbs have returned to Mostar in lower number since the war. Bosniak and

Croat students each have a second choice for gymnasium education. The Bosniak Second Gymnasium is full and the Bosniak slots for the Gymnasium Mostar were oversubscribed. The Croat students also have another choice for gymnasium education from which to choose, and the number of Croat students at the Gymnasium Mostar was somewhat below their allotted number of slots. The respondents did not indicate if Croats found a qualitative difference between their choices, but those interviewed reported that Croat parents tended to be more resistant to sending their children to the unified school. As a result of this difference, the Croat school director decided to actively offer the Bosniak children the option of filling the unused Croat slots. These Bosniak students are studying the Croat curriculum. There have been no reported problems with this arrangement, and the Bosniak students move fluently between two languages in their academic life.

b. To promote the administrative unification of the six ‘two schools under roof’ in Herzegovina-Neretva, through promoting the transfer of good practice from the Gymnasium Mostar (OSCE objective).

This is an ongoing objective that will only be accomplished over the long term. Curriculum reform, changes in teacher quality and methodology will also ultimately contribute to ending the need for two-under-one. The effective processes used with the Gymnasium Mostar and the outcomes of that project will provide options for use in supporting this objective.

What *has* been accomplished to date is the administrative unification of the Gymnasium Mostar, which could provide a model for further unification efforts in other schools (see Recommendations.) The Director, a Croat, and the Deputy Director, a Bosniak, reported that their relationship as decision makers in the school is excellent. Teachers and students reported that the smooth functioning of the school and the lack of strife when the school was first opened was due in large part to the collaborative relationship of these two leaders. This was also true for representatives from the school board who reported that the school board functions very well as a

unified body. The directors and the school board chair believed that OSCE support for their effort was a contributing factor to their initial and continued success. Everyone directly related to the Gymnasium Mostar, and representatives of both national groups, agreed strongly that administrative unification was the most effective way to manage a school. They believed that all schools should unify their administrations, as well as the teachers' council and students' council. They believed that the model for unification used here increased the likelihood that students and teachers would accept a multi-national learning environment.

A potential outcome may be evolving in the changes that are taking place in the Traffic and Construction Schools in Mostar. Interviews with the Directors of the two schools gave only peripheral indication that the unification of the Gymnasium Mostar was effecting the changes they were experiencing at this time. They were aware of the project and had generally positive impressions of it. They were pleased with the efforts made by the OSCE to bring their students (Croat and Bosniak) together for joint field trips related to their professional development. The Traffic School is just beginning its two-under-one arrangement and the Croat director was somewhat less positive about the possibility of a unified system than the Bosniak director. The Construction School situation is particularly difficult as both groups appear to want to improve their physical facilities on the east and west side of the city, but do not want to move towards unification or a joint facility. All of the directors expressed a strong desire for assistance with bringing their textbooks, teaching methods, practicum experiences, and equipment up to international standards. This was an area where they felt that the OSCE could be of great assistance through the same type of coordinated effort used to bring the Gymnasium Mostar to its current standards. They described the OSCE as a potential facilitator for bringing together appropriate stakeholders and funders to improve the quality of vocational education offered.

c. To promote and support the further legal and administrative unification of the school,

through the provision of material support to the joint administration and teachers' room (OSCE objective).

This objective was accomplished. IC provided extensive material support for the unified administration, which is working effectively.

d. To facilitate the return of the remaining 200 Federation curriculum students to the building, through the reconstruction and furnishing of four classrooms on the second floor (OSCE objective).

This objective was accomplished. The physical rehabilitation of the first floor classrooms allowed for the return of the 200 Federation curriculum students.

e. To create the conditions for additional students to benefit from the unified Gymnasium, through completing the reconstruction of the building and thereby increasing the capacity of the school from 650 to 1,050 students (OSCE objective).

This objective was largely accomplished. The figure of 1050 students was the original number of students in the Gymnasium Mostar prior to the war. With the reconstruction and unification there are now 650 students using the school building not including 100 IB students who started that program in the fall of 2006. As the top floor of the building is completed that space will be used for the IB students and it is planned to increase that number to 200 students. The potential now is for 900 students to be using the school in the near future.

While these objectives focus on the numbers of students who benefited from the reconstruction of the school and unified administration, it was the *process* of getting the students back to the school where the OSCE's role in supporting the return of the Bosniak students was recognized by all interviewed. It was the OSCE's role in this objective that generated the most controversy in the Mostar press during the early stages of unification. The news items reviewed accused Amb. Beecroft and Matthew Newton of attempting to force the changes on the Gymnasium. However, every person interviewed who was directly involved in the school or the political process of unification was specifically asked what they recalled about OSCE staff interaction at that time.

No matter what national group they represented, all stated that they recalled *no serious disagreements with or negative actions on the part of the OSCE during this phase*. On the contrary, without exception, they believed that OSCE staff was open to dialogue with stakeholders. Some noted there were disagreements on process, but that these were resolved because both sides had open minds and the best interests of the children at heart. Further, they described the OSCE's action as a friendly and necessary intervention without which the progress made today would not have come as far or progressed as smoothly. One decision maker, who was present at municipality council sessions, said, "The OSCE had a presence at every school board meeting and was the force that got this project going, but the OSCE was not making the decisions." Another said, "The OSCE has been great and supportive. Matthew has been someone we could count on and trust. We are an example of successful integration. If the OSCE didn't do it, no one would."

And, a related objective (d) from the Norwegian Embassy:

f. Attracting more students to the Gymnasium Mostar by improving the appearance of the building, and the closing of the building to the elements, though installing windows in the top floor of the building.

This objective was accomplished and the OSCE role in coordinating a variety of donors contributing to the material support of the physical plant and providing materials for offices and classrooms was recognized by all of those interviewed. This was especially true of the OSCE's collaboration on the Norwegian Embassy funds to refurbish classrooms and create a well-equipped student council meeting room. The 2nd or top floor windows were installed and that floor is currently being fitted out for IB classroom space. The stakeholders believed that the physical improvements to the school contributed to a stable, safe and pleasant learning environment that students and staff looked forward to attending on a daily basis. The student council room is in regular use and is well maintained by the students.

- g. To promote further meaningful interaction between the students of the two curricula, through supporting the joint library resource centre and sports teams/activities (OSCE objective). This objective was also one included in the Norwegian funding: (a) promoting a spirit of community service among the Gymnasium Mostar students, and interaction between the Bosniaks and Croats, through supporting joint student council activities in the local community (Norwegian objective);**

This objective was accomplished. All of those directly involved in the Gymnasium Mostar testified to the accomplishment of this objective and described the results as *beyond their expectations*. Students attribute the interethnic relationships they have in and out of school to two things. First, their parents were graduates of the Gymnasium Mostar before the war and/or were described as less nationalistic than many in Mostar. Second, they believed that the extra curricular work that the OSCE did with students and teachers even before the Bosniaks returned to the school had a major influence on their ability to interact constructively with each other when everyone was in the school. They attributed these joint activities with providing them the opportunity to learn that they were not very different from each other and that they had more in common with the other groups than parents and teachers had sometimes taught them in the past. As one Bosniak student said with great surprise, after an early joint activity, “They (Croats) have the same sense of humour we do!” The unified student council is considered one of the major successes resulting from the efforts of the OSCE and the Norwegians. The evaluator attended one student council meeting (without a translator) in order to observe the processes used by the students. Students interacted with each other in their own language and sometimes in English. The members were adept at using effective meeting management skills and they were actively engaged in planning for joint activities. Seventeen members were present and everyone was an active participant in the meeting. In later interviews they attested to the fact that the *group process training* they received through the OSCE was very valuable and gave them skills they were using outside of the student council activities as well. One student said, “It was the process

training that helped me overcome feelings about differences.”¹⁶

A Bosniak and Croat student from the Traffic School were interviewed and both had participated in OSCE-arranged field trips and OSCE efforts to assist them in developing a unified student council. These two students were in their final year and did not feel they could devote the time to continuing the unification work. They told the evaluator that they believed OSCE should continue to support this effort and obtain involvement of a larger number of students. They described problems related to the current system of single nationality shifts that they believed were time consuming and were taking away from their valuable time in the classroom. They seemed to believe that if the school were unified in the way the Gymnasium Mostar was, many of these problems would be non-existent. The problems described included breaks that were so short students could not use the lavatories, clean-up efforts one group was expected to do in the classroom to save time for the cleaning ladies, while the other group was not required to do such clean-up, etc.; all problems that could be addressed and worked out by a joint student council.

Objective (b) of the Norwegian funding included:

Encouraging a broader perspective, independent research and critical thinking among students, and interaction between Bosniak and Croat students of the Gymnasium Mostar, through supporting the establishment of a common library resource centre for the Federation and Croat curricula students.

In the Norwegian Final Report, there is the following description of this outcome:

The resource centre in the Gymnasium Mostar is fully equipped, open every school day, all day, and is frequently busy. Croat and Bosniak students use the facilities

¹⁶ There was an OSCE decision to return some of the Norwegian funds after they had been partially committed to a scheduled retreat for students and designated to be spent on other appropriate activities. This led to some confusion and management problems as the funds had to be rerouted to the Gymnasium through other means, and the retreat for students had to be cancelled. It was not clear to the stakeholders exactly why the funds were returned, but as OSCE donor relations are an important component of why the Gymnasium Mostar project was so successful, this type of confusion should be avoided whenever possible.

jointly, and the Centre has organised a number of joint events, such as poetry readings. It is difficult to measure the impact of the centre in terms of broadening attitudes, encouraging independent research and critical thinking, however, according to the librarian, the students are taking an increasing interest in the non-curricular books, which were selected to challenge the preconceived ideas and existing knowledge of the students. There is a particular interest in the multi-media material. It is also positive that the teachers are using the material as teaching aids in their classrooms. As of September 2006, the students and teachers of the United World Colleges will also use the library resource centre.

An interview with the librarian during the current evaluation corroborated this statement. At the time of this interview, the library was still slowly accumulating a wide variety of non-curriculum-specific texts. The librarian also corroborated that the video materials were the most popular and that the library very much needed more video equipment and resources.

Another Norwegian objective (c) was:

Introduction of integrated classes and modern teaching practices, through supporting the installation of new UWC science laboratories.

The UWC-IB science laboratories funded by Norway were in use at the time of this evaluation. Though dedicated to (International Baccalaureate) IB classes, the IB program was organizing extra-curricular science classes for non-IB students. It is hoped that this will lead to the conduct of integrated science classes from both national curricula. Staff and students believed that the laboratories were a place where inter-ethnic contact could be fostered because the students are more interested in learning than they are in their differences.

Two related projects, the use of the new IT lab contributed by Italy and Japan and the International Baccalaureate program were beginning at the time of this evaluation. Students, teachers, administrators and decision-makers were very excited about the prospects for these projects. The first integrated IT class took place in the Gymnasium Mostar shortly after the evaluator left Mostar. This is the first truly integrated class in the country (with the exception of the District of Brcko), bringing together students from different national curricula to be taught

according to a fully harmonized curriculum and the same textbook (lectured in Croatian and Bosnian). A significant aspect of this is that the first grade Bosniak and Croat students were given a choice between segregated laboratory classes (existing curricula) and integrated classes (using a modernized curriculum developed with Japanese technical assistance). All Bosniak and Croat students chose the integrated classes. Those interviewed believed the OSCE's coordination efforts smoothed the way for these programs.

All students interviewed were most anxious to participate in the IB classes. The students spoke openly about their disdain for people around them who teach prejudice and hatred based on nationalism and religion. They described themselves as valuing their education over their differences. As mentioned earlier, the students believed that the attitudes of many of their parents were a contributing factor in their openness and, secondly, the exposure to others provided by their contact in this school setting. Again, they stated that the OSCE's efforts to foster joint extra-curricular activities contributed to this. They indicated that they understood the need to become educated using international standards.

VII. Additional Areas Identified Related to OSCE Interests in Education

A. Civil Society and Participation:

As mentioned above, the OSCE's role in the establishment of the new Gymnasium Mostar was integrally involved in issues of public administration and policy development. Those interviewed believed that the OSCE's presence in the process, while not the only influence, was one of the more important reasons that political forces came together resulting in the many outcomes identified in this report. The stakeholders' involvement with the OSCE in this project gave them

a model for ways to engage in social and political change that they felt was lacking in their past experience. Stakeholders described the political process as manipulative, with politicians using nationalism (including language issues) and religion, especially in education policy, to fan the flames of separation and hatred. They described a sense of powerlessness in the face of this manipulative behaviour. Most of those interviewed, especially the students, recognised that as a people they did not have a history of critical thinking and engagement in civic discourse and described themselves (all former Yugoslavs) as “immature” in this area. They believed this immaturity in civic affairs was a main reason politicians could so easily use education as a way of manipulating the uninformed. When describing what OSCE staff had done for those involved in the Gymnasium Mostar project, the Gymnasium Mostar director said that showing them how to lobby was one the most important things that the OSCE did, saying, “That was a very unknown area to us.” On the other hand, there was, among the interviewees, a sense of resignation and acquiescence when faced with the power of others, which is consistent with a lack of ability to see how they can influence the system. When asked how they would like to change policy and implementation several responded, “These things are in the hands of the politicians.” This indicates that there is more work to be done in engaging citizens and low-level decision makers in strengthening their ability to work with the larger system.

B. Education Reform

Attempts at curriculum reform have been ongoing at various levels since the end of the war, and monitoring and supporting the progress of education reform falls under the OSCE education mandate. As an interim approach in the reform process, a common core curriculum of relatively long standing (since 2003) exists, but this is only partial, and consists of the elements that are common to all subjects. For non-contentious subjects such as Mathematics and Science, this

element is considerable. However, for subjects that are considered to be politically and nationally specific, referred to as the ‘National Group of Subjects’ (Language, History, Geography, Religion) these elements are minimal.

Most of those interviewed in Mostar, Prozor/Rama and Zepce were frustrated with the pace of curriculum change and the inconsistent manner in which the core curriculum was used across schools. One Gymnasium Mostar student complained, “Reform is six years old and not much has changed.”

On a more positive note, teachers and administrators from Gymnasium Mostar and Zepce were very excited about the IB programme coming to schools in BiH. They believe that this is the way of the future and want to see it expanded to as many schools as possible. Some had a relative who had been in IB programs elsewhere, and respondents had the perception that they had excelled because of it. Some brought up the example of Slovenia using the IB as a model for their *entire* curriculum reform effort, but recognized that, unlike BiH, Slovenia has one common language.

C. The Role of Language in Reform Efforts

Language, History, Geography and Religion are the courses that are weighted down with cultural relevance to each national group. This topic came up almost without exception in the interviews. Among the Gymnasium Mostar administrators and students interviewed, there was a general feeling that too much was made of the differences between these subjects among the three national groups, and that this was a factor that significantly slowed education reform. In Prozor/Rama and among the Traffic School and Construction School directors, the Croats were more apt to say that the separate languages and other cultural differences must be maintained, though too few stakeholders were interviewed to consider this significant to their culture alone.

None of the Gymnasium Mostar students interviewed expressed concern over losing their culture if they studied with students of other national groups. What most of those interviewed did agree on was that there is not a simple answer to this problem and there must be a step-by-step, careful process of negotiating and renegotiating this issue over time. Their attitude was generally hopeful that in the long run, if other processes were pursued such as unified administrations, joint extra-curricular activities for students, teachers and parents, and teacher training, the differences between the groups would be less striking and threatening.

Most believed that monoethnic education left gaps in the experience and thinking of those students who were in such schools. As one stakeholder put it, “Kids are getting the education as prescribed by curriculum, but in multiethnic settings kids are getting together – contact is very different. They are learning the Other is not a monster and they are not deprived of their language by going to school with each other.” Those interviewed felt that the OSCE could play a role in continuing to monitor and encourage the ongoing reform process.

Programs such as IB were seen as the way to help BiH students to prepare for participation in a global economy. Students saw programs meeting international standards as a way out of the poor economic conditions facing BiH at present. Coordinating support for diversity-appropriate curricula that meet international standards was another area where the OSCE was seen as a potentially strong advocate.

Teachers and students described a variety of types of workshops teachers have taken to improve their teaching methods and build their competency in child-centred, interactive methods. Once teachers leave university they are responsible for their own professional development. The IC has provided most of the training that teachers and students have received in methodology, group process, etc. The OSCE, in particular, provided training for the students. The stakeholders

attested to the contribution they believed this training made to set the stage for integration and provide the skills needed to integrate without conflict.

D. The Role of Parents

As noted earlier, the students at Gymnasium Mostar credited the open-mindedness of their parents for their own willingness to come to the school and for encouraging them to accept the differences in others. Students stated that they actually liked learning about others. Students and adults alike at all interview sites blamed parents for being the source of the “pollution” of children’s minds towards people of differing national groups. However, even the students of open-minded parents said that the main concern that everyone had when the Gymnasium Mostar unification was initially proposed and implemented was the fear of physical violence on the part of others. Administrators expressed this fear at the beginning also. Nothing ever materialized, and by the time of these interviews, this concern was shared almost as an afterthought.

Administrators identified parents as one of their biggest problems when bringing students together whether in unified schools like Gymnasium Mostar and Zepce or in two-under-one, like Prozor/Rama. Again, those interviewed believed this was a problem mostly among the uninformed who allowed themselves to be manipulated by politicians and religious leaders. It was often noted that it is important to continue efforts to bring youth together in spite of parental objections because through them, change will come. The perception of parental influence also suggests that parents should be a vital part of unification efforts. They should have joint activities structured just for them and/or, perhaps with their children in mixed groups. One director in Zepce noted that the creation of a joint parent council made a significant difference in that school’s unification effort. A Zepce teacher said, “Identity and language should be nurtured, but parents need to be persuaded that children will not lose their culture by exposure to the other. In

fact, students are very interested in other cultures.”

E. Contrasts between Gymnasium Mostar, Zepce and Prozor/Rama

In looking at three separate schools: the unified Gymnasium Mostar, the unified gymnasium and technical school Zepce and the two-under-one primary school in Prozor/Rama, it seems a third element necessary to the success of unification is *readiness*. That is, are the political and social environments conducive to making this move? In Mostar, a critical mass of decision makers appear to have been at the edge of readiness, and pressure from one group (Bosniaks) and the OSCE, along with process assistance from the OSCE seem to have pushed this situation over the edge towards unification. In Zepce there was evidence of a somewhat more united political will, and Zepce was offered “carrots” by the IC that decision makers did not want to turn down. Those interviewed in Zepce all attributed a large part of the success of unification there to the fact that it was a small town where people had family and friendship relations that went well back before the war and were picked up after. In Prozor/Rama, even though the IC, and the OSCE in particular, were working there to support unification, the political leaders and parents were simply not ready. However, administrators did express a desire for more OSCE/IC support for specific needs, e.g., more computers, more renovation, etc. The lessons learned in each of these cases are:

1. When a community is not ready for change it may still be valuable to offer and provide different types of process assistance over time that may contribute to an increasing level of readiness for unification. In Prozor/Rama, OSCE’s work is respected and appreciated. By continuing efforts here and by collaborating with other partners who can also strengthen the capacity for change and build a critical mass of support over the long term, change may begin to occur in incremental steps.

2. In both Mostar and Zepce the use of the IC, including OSCE resources, were a useful tool in bringing about change. Working with communities to help them to realize, in concrete ways, how this type of collaboration brings them closer to a state of readiness for inclusion in European affairs appears to have been an effective tool in both communities.
3. Providing technical assistance in the development of good process tools, e.g., school board management, financial management of education systems, collaborative process for running meetings and dealing with conflict, tools for civil engagement, etc., are strategies that can contribute to long-term success. These were all cited in Mostar as contributors to success.

VIII. Conclusions and Recommendations

After three years of OSCE engagement with Gymnasium Mostar, the qualitative findings from this study strongly suggest the objectives set forth for the project were largely reached. OSCE staff, working with other groups and donors focused on the revitalization of the historic city centre, and accomplished two main outcomes.

First, as part of a collaborative effort to find donors for the restoration of the Gymnasium Mostar, the school is now a functional building with much of the equipment needed to provide a safe and pleasant learning environment. Though all donors had not completed their particular contributions (e.g., the completion of the façade by Spain was still waiting on final agreements from the local groups overseeing the restoration of the entire city centre) most of the work needed to restore the functional use of the school was completed. Interviewees did acknowledge,

however, that compared to the quality of many schools in Western Europe, there is still a need for much more in the way of equipment and supplies.

This restoration effort went beyond the purely functional as can be seen in the much used student council room contributed by Norway and the IT laboratory contributed by Japan and Italy. The respondents associated with the Gymnasium Mostar placed a high value on the contribution these additions made not only to the physical space, but also for the added value of providing intentional opportunities for bringing students together in an integrated environment. The OSCE was given much credit for the coordination of the fund raising. Few critiques surfaced in the interviews and were mostly related to the physical rehabilitation of the site, but in further checking by the evaluator these turned out to be based upon misinformation.

Second, the objectives designed to bring about initial unification and integration were largely met. The main focus of the OSCE was on supporting and facilitating the administrative unification process. There was a second explicit theory that administrative unification would contribute in some way to integration of the students of different nationalities and, subsequently, a lessening of the tensions between the two groups. The OSCE staff that worked on this project did more than help to gain agreements to unify administrative functions and extra-curricular activities, they also provided process training and facilitation that participants stated unequivocally built capacity for constructive problem solving and lowered the barriers of separation by national identity.

There was also anecdotal evidence that even students who were not regularly engaged in extra-curricular, joint activities were finding new relationships through physical proximity in the new building. One respondent was talking about the difference between the more motivated students who might participate in activities such as the student council versus the students who “just hang

out smoking together in the bathrooms.” This observer said that over time the contact these students had there led to discussions about cultural issues that included two notable items. Croat students introduced Bosniak students to the history of the mass murders at the border town of Bleiburg at the end of World War II when the British released thousands of captive Croats who were then massacred by Serbs. The Bosniak students had not known this story. The Bosniak students were taking the Croat students to Stari Most for their first visit to the Muslim part of the city. This anecdote is consistent with the students’ comments about wanting to know about others and not finding the differences negative or frightening. These are just small examples of the sharing of differences and culture that are resulting from integration at the Gymnasium.

This is a key outcome resulting from the OSCE’s work. Social science theory suggests that bringing conflicting groups into physical contact with each other in organized ways is one way to change the attitudes and behaviours of each group toward the other¹⁷. However, simply being in the presence of the other, e.g., sharing the same classroom may not have this effect. What have been shown to contribute to changing attitudes and behaviour in these cases are the addition of intentional knowledge gain about the other and the development of collaborative problem solving skills to be used within a group¹⁸. Both contact and process were used by the OSCE to bring about the changes identified in this evaluation.

¹⁷ Niens, U., E. Cairns, et al. (2004). *Contact and Conflict in Northern Ireland, Researching The Troubles: Social Science Perspectives on the Northern Ireland Conflict*. O. Hargie and D. Dickson. Edinburgh, Mainstream Press.

¹⁸ Lantieri, L. and J. Patti (1996). *Waging Peace in Our Schools*. Boston, Beacon Press.

VIII. A. Recommendations

One of the objectives of this evaluation was to determine what components of the Gymnasium Mostar process might be replicable. It is important to note that each location in BiH will be unique so it would not be possible to follow the exact steps used in Mostar to achieve the same result – a school that is fully unified in the administrative sense, and where integrated classes are beginning. However if the outcomes are dissected together with the processes that led to them, there are steps that may be effective in supporting similar results in other locales.

1. Education Reform: From the interviews in Mostar, Prozor/Rama and Zepce, it appears there are different levels of community readiness for school unification. In recognizing the current political and social obstructions to unification, the OSCE should make efforts to shape attitudes towards unification among those who accept the idea and build out from there. This might be done through certain specific initiatives, such as - quantifying/publicizing the financial waste, organizing study visits of parent, student and teacher representatives to schools which have been successfully unified to gather first hand information on the implications of unification (e.g., will not result in the loss of teaching jobs), encouraging NGOs to organize joint extra-curricular activities. Supporting adoption of the law on the Education Agency and continuing support for development of a uniform curriculum for use throughout BiH should be pursued.
2. Building Support: All interviewees were asked how they would go about introducing administrative integration to other divided school communities. The main recommendation was to take participants in the Gymnasium Mostar project to other communities to describe what worked and what resulted in Mostar. Use the findings from this report to continue to foster a desire for unification based on an understanding of its

cost effectiveness and contribution to better quality education. It was believed that students could be especially powerful ambassadors for the process. Teams could also be used combining an administrator, students, one or two teachers and a school board member. Parents of students at the Gymnasium Mostar should also be included. As the Director of the Gymnasium Mostar put it, “The best ambassadors to other communities considering this would be our youth. They are not less Bosniak or Croat for going to the school, but better students and people.”

3. Clarification of Facts: Two issues came up repeatedly that fit in the OSCE’s work regarding public administration and rule of law. The first was the concern over the loss of jobs that would occur under administrative unification. The second was the constant claim that both national groups have legal ownership of the buildings. It would be useful to have a factual rationalization developed to address the first concern. It may be that some jobs would be affected, but if this can be linked to improved quality of education and broader education rationalization, this argument could be debunked. Working with communities to clarify the present laws regarding legal ownership of school properties would take this argument off the table as an argument used by those who oppose unification. Most of those interviewed stressed that the way to get parents and leaders to support change is to make the case for quality education and what it will lead to for Bosnian graduates.
4. Language: Contact and process provided by OSCE initiatives turned out to be more important than the issue of language in changing attitudes and behaviours. These same processes can be used elsewhere. It is very clear at this time that language (along with history and religion) is still a very sensitive issue for even those who do not support separate texts and education. The concern is that, since this is such a divisive issue, it should only be changed over time and with great sensitivity toward the proponents of

separate languages. The Gymnasium Mostar students interviewed had moved over three years from support of separate languages to believing that language was a “silly” thing to be fighting over. This did not happen because they were forced to integrate language in school, but because they made contact with each other and, over time, began to accept each other’s languages. It also happened because they were gradually introduced to opportunities to study subjects of interest in other languages. They also came to realize that they did not have to give up their own language even if they studied in another, e.g., IB classes in English and the joint IT classes. Starting small and gradually increasing alternatives to single language classes that also enhance the quality of education will begin to slowly change this issue.

5. Joint Extracurricular Activities. One of the most effective actions taken by the OSCE was the initiation of joint activities with students prior to the transfer of the Bosniak students to the school. This is a strategy that many communities may be ready for even if they are not yet close to administrative unification. As one administrator put it, “Step-by-step we saw a better future. Our persistence and the OSCE’s paid off. Lots of joint events made a difference.” The students interviewed in Mostar and Zepce stressed repeatedly that youth have many common interests that have nothing to do with national cultures. They also testified to the excitement and sense of empowerment they have when they are put together to learn skills such as communication, conflict resolution, facilitation, collaborative problem solving, etc. The OSCE should act as a broker to find funding for programs like Education for Peace and others like it, in support of broader social reforms.
6. Support of Technical/Vocational Unification: The current restoration of the technical schools in Mostar and the shuffling of students among those campuses offer an ideal opportunity for the OSCE to support movement toward unification in this area also. While

there is still resistance to this idea among some leaders, all of those connected to these schools that were interviewed believed that the field trips the OSCE provided for the students were useful. The Bosniak and Croat students (one of each) interviewed suggested that the OSCE continue its work to help the students unify the student body. Providing further joint activities and supporting the emerging sense of common interests on the part of the administration of these two-under-one schools may lead to unification, and, at the least, there is the potential for bringing the students to the level of understanding and integration achieved at the Gymnasium.

7. Rule of Law: The Mission should use general promotion of rule of law and democracy efforts to provide training for citizens in how to more effectively address and/or lobby decision makers. The comment referenced earlier about how working with the OSCE had helped those involved learn to lobby for the interests of students in schools reflects the desire that most interviewees expressed to change the passive manner in which their people have related to power in the past.

VIII. B. Conclusion

The Gymnasium Mostar project resulted in the outcomes identified in this report because the OSCE provided the impetus and OSCE staff provided consistent and continual support for the project. The OSCE garnered donors who met their commitments resulting in a safe and pleasant learning environment that is better equipped than many gymnasia in BiH at this time. As described in this report, all of those interviewed provided ample evidence that unification did not occur simply with the school administration, but also among teachers and students groups. Students testified that they believe they have benefited greatly from the resources and training that the OSCE made possible.

There are indications from the data from all interviews that these same strategies may be useful steps in bringing about unification and integration at other sites. If the processes covered in the recommendations are broken down and applied where there is readiness for any strategy or a combination of strategies, there is a real possibility that the OSCE might be able to “grow” unification in other locations. It will be especially important for the OSCE to work to strengthen curriculum reform.

One of the major concerns expressed by those interviews is the fear the IC and the OSCE, in particular, will be leaving BiH soon. The reason given for this was that things are calmer now and the IC does not feel the urgent need to be present that existed after the war. The respondents also believe that the IC, including the OSCE, has a short attention span and is not willing to stay for the long haul. Those interviewed believe that great progress has been made in many ways in Mostar and BiH, but that there is much more to be done and they cannot yet do it alone. This is a common view of the IC in many places that are recovering from conflict or natural disaster. In the peace building field the issue of long-term commitment to places such as BiH is a serious one. Practitioners in the field talk about what they call “good enough” conflict resolution or peace building¹⁹. The thinking is that those who provide support in such situations have an expectation that success is a complete resolution of the conflict causes and often leave in frustration when it looks like it is going to take too long to get to that outcome. Ross and Lederach take the long view. They believe that organisations engaging in peace building need to break down the long view of success into incremental, doable steps and recognise that each time one of these steps is reached there is a good enough result for that point in time.

¹⁹ See, for example: Ross, M. H. (1995) and Lederach, J. P. (1997).

The OSCE has already successfully worked through many steps towards a larger success with the people of Mostar, and elsewhere in BiH. The OSCE has now got a set of processes that can be used in a wide variety of sites to work towards the ultimate goal of complete educational unification in a variety of ways, administration, student integration, language sharing, etc. The outcomes to date are good enough, and the findings should be used to develop a strategy to spread these processes across a wider area in a cost effective manner.

APPENDIX A

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS REVIEWED FOR THIS REPORT

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Seminar organized by the Bosnian Institute and held at St. Anthony's Monastery, Sarajevo. English version edited and translated by Branka Mag.

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APPENDIX B

GENERIC QUESTIONS USED FOR INTERVIEWS

Principals/Other Education Officials

- How did you first hear about the OSCE/IC Mostar Gym project? What did you think at the time? What do you think now?
- As an administrator (teacher, etc.), what challenges or facilitators have you faced in this project? Do you feel you have influence in shaping the education system in BiH?
- What type of education do children need to be participating, contributing citizens and works in BiH? Can this school provide that?
- What kind of future do you see for your students when they finish this school?
- Given the system in BiH of separate schools or two-schools-under-one-roof, what are the advantages or disadvantages to students studying in such schools?
- What are the advantages or disadvantages of going to a unified school?
- If the history of BiH is the reason for the separation, do you see a time coming when this need may be passed?
- What would it take to heal/reconcile the separate groups?
- Are teachers/professors prepared to promote the healing process? How are they doing this?
- Are the unis graduating teachers who are qualified to teach in today's schools, given the changes in technology and introduction of programs such as IB?
- Is there further training you would like teachers to have that would equip them for working with a multi-ethnic population?
- If OSCE were to replicate this program elsewhere in BiH without all of the financial resources that have been put in here, what steps would you recommend?
- What parts of the program are replicable? What components have made the most impact? The least?
- How might they overcome local resistance to such a program?
- What do you think about the role OSCE and the IC have played in this program?

- Would you be willing to help promote such a project elsewhere in BiH?

Additional for teachers - Have your own teaching methods changed? If so, in what way?

Additional for students

- Do you think you have changed in anyway since coming to this program?
- Do you think your education quality has changed since coming to this program?
- What would you like teachers to be doing better as they work with a multi-ethnic population?

APPENDIX C

PERSONS INTERVIEWED FOR THIS REPORT

OSCE Staff in Mostar

- Rolf van Uye, Regional Center Director
- Katrin Hett, Democratization
- Jan Bolling, Senior Human Rights Officer
- Matthew Newton, Outgoing Education Coordinator, Mostar
- Sadeta Begtasević, Education Officer
- Sanja Arapović, Acting Education Coordinator, Field Office Capljina

OSCE Staff in Sarajevo

- Amb. Davidson, Head of Mission
- Claude Kieffer, Director, Education Department
- Valery Perry, Deputy Director, Education Department
- Legal Department staff
- Sladana Curak, Finance and Management Advisor, Education Department

Mostar

- Ankica Čovic, Director/Principal, Gymnasia Mostar
- Bakir Krpo, Deputy Director MG,
- Jago Musa, Minister of Education,
- Sanada Sadovic, Department of Social Affairs, City of Mostar
- Ivan Rozić, Co-chair & Founder, MG Student Council (4th yr)
- Jasmin Elezović (Bosniac), Student Council Co-Chair/Founder (4th year)

- Amilla (Bosniac) Student Council member (4th year)
- Sergej (Serb) and Dino (Croat/Bosniac), Student Council Members (1st yr)
- Valentina Mindoljević, physics teacher at MG and IB teacher
- Jasminka Bratić, Bosniac School Board Chair
- Zdenko Landeka, Croat Director of Traffic School
- Ahmet Pelko, Bosnian Traffic School Director
- Senid Sarić, Bosniac Traffic School Student
- Tamara Čavar, Croat Traffic School Student
- Indira Maksumić, Education for Peace Teacher at MG
- Mirsad Jusić, Bosnia Director, Construction School
- Paul Regan, IB Director, Gymnasium Mostar
- Božo Ćorić, Head of Dept. of Social Affairs

Prozor/Rama

- Ivan Prskalo, Croat dir. Prozor/Rama Primary school
- Belkida Dželilović, Bosniac Director, primary school
- Bosniac Parents, Damir Hadžić (teacher at school, shopkeeper/librarian and daughter, Tina Hadžić, goes to Croat gym)
- Husein , an art teacher at Prozor/Rama school (need to get his name for my records)

Žepce

- Zijad Malićbegović, Bosnian Director, Secondary Mixed School
- Branko Mijatović, Croat Director, Secondary Mixed School
- Vahida Bijedić, Bosniac Pedagogue
- Nikica Jurić, Croat Pedagogue

- Ljelja Vilić, Teacher
- Five Students (breakdown: 1 boy, 4 girls; 3 Croats/2 Bosniacs; 2 gym, 3 tech), plus I met with a Croat cooking class of about 15 with one Serb student who was quite outspoken

Other stakeholder representatives:

- Heidi Olufsen, Norwegian Embassy
- Mark Wheeler, OSCE staff seconded to OHR
- Naghmeh Sobhani, Education for Peace

APPENDIX D

CAROLYNE V. ASHTON

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Biographical Sketch

Evaluation Consultation: Ms. Ashton provides evaluation services especially focused on measuring the efficacy of collaborative processes and human services programs. She uses a collaborative evaluation methodology that is results-focused, and involves the client directly in the design process. Recent evaluation experience includes:

- C Project manager for an evaluation of a nation-wide training provided by the Centre for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP),
- C Project director for an evaluation funded by the National Institute on Dispute Resolution of four community-based mediation centres using consensus-building processes to address public policy issues,
- C Project director of an evaluation of two community partnerships funded by CSAP for five years to use a collaborative model in addressing substance abuse prevention in the City of Hampton, Virginia and Prince Georges County (MD),
- C Training and consultation in the use of a planning and evaluation model developed for the Virginia Effective Practices Project on Safe and Drug Free School & Community Act funds. The model is generic to many types of social change programs,
- C Evaluation designs for AmeriCorps' cultural diversity training contractor. Ms Ashton is presently engaged in an ongoing evaluation of training provided to the Corporation for National Service by Campaign Consultations, Inc.,
- C Evaluation of a cultural diversity management training series for the Fairfax (VA) County Public Schools and for the Girl Power Program of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

C Evaluation curriculum development for National Association for Community Mediators, and

C Evaluation and evaluation training for UNICEF peace education programs in Indonesia, Albania, and Armenia.

Ms. Ashton also provides curriculum development for peace education programs for primary and secondary education, training in conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving and facilitation skills and has acted as project/process manager on several projects, including some of those mentioned above.

Education: Ms. Ashton graduated Phi Beta Kappa and cum laude from Trinity College, Washington, DC, in International Relations. She completed requirements for a combined MS and Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Ms. Ashton is currently a Ph.D. candidate at ICAR/GMU. Expected Ph.D. completion date is April 2007.